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Aggreko honored for efficiency

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NEW IBERIA - The people who keep giant generators up and running for events like the Olympics or hurricane relief have been recognized for streamlining the work process at their New Iberia shop.

The national repair center of Aggreko, a company that provides rental power and temperature, received an award Monday from the Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana.

In a ceremony attended by various local and state officials, Aggreko received MEPoL's second annual Platinum Award for Continued Excellence.

MEPoL is a statewide consulting program jointly funded by the federal government and the state, through the University of Louisiana, that provides assistance to manufacturers throughout the state.

Aggreko earned the award after going through MEPoL training on "lean manufacturing" - essentially streamlining the work process and shop layouts.

U.S. Sen. David Vitter, R-Metairie, presented the award, saying MEPoL's work to help manufacturing companies is "key to continue to grow good and diversified jobs in the area."

Aggreko provides giant generators for a slew of events and emergency situations, from the Super Bowl and the Olympics to businesses in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Its national repair center is located in New Iberia and employs more than 120 people - the most of any one of Aggreko's 46 locations in North America.

Mitch Boudreaux, Aggreko's national repair manager, said the training helped the center to reorganize its shop and decrease its average turnaround time on repairs from 57 days to 39 days.

"A common vision, and communicating that common vision, is key to kicking off some of these changes," Boudreaux said.

The company was set to receive the award Aug. 30, the day after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans. Instead, the company and its employees were needed to provide power in the storm's aftermath.

Aggreko generators provided 9,000 hours of power to Tulane University after Katrina, helping to get the school ready to reopen this semester, said Corinne Dupuy, acting director of MEPoL. Many of the New Iberia center's employees spent weeks at a time in New Orleans maintaining those generators, Dupuy said.

State Sen. Craig Romero, R-New Iberia, and U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon, D-Napoleonville, also attended the event.

"It's exciting for everybody here, especially the employees," Romero said.
